



# Federal Legislative Update

Quarter 2, June 2018



## Introduction

The Texas Workforce Investment Council's *Federal Legislative Update* is published on a quarterly basis and informs stakeholders about developments in federal legislation that may impact workforce policy for Texas.

## Recent Highlights from Congress

### The Omnibus Funding Bill

President Trump signed the fiscal year (FY) 2018 Omnibus funding bill on March 26, 2018. This bill continues to fund the federal government through September 30, 2018. The bill provides the following for workforce and education programs:

#### Training

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult: \$846 million (\$30 million increase)  
This program assists disadvantaged, low-skilled, unemployed, and underemployed adults with gaining the skills and credentials needed to compete in the workforce.
- WIOA Youth: \$903 million (\$30 million increase)  
This program prepares youth for jobs or postsecondary education through career guidance, educational attainment, and training assistance.
- WIOA Dislocated Worker: \$1.04 billion (\$20 million increase)  
This program prepares and provides training for dislocated workers for new jobs and careers.
- Registered Apprenticeship: \$145 million (\$50 million increase)  
This training program allows participants to gain academic knowledge and on-the-job skills while earning a paycheck.
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Service: \$666.4 million (\$5 million decrease)  
This program provides comprehensive recruiting, job search, and related services to businesses and job seekers to connect employers seeking workers and individuals seeking employment.

#### Education

- Career and Technical Education: \$1.1 billion (\$75 million increase)  
Secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs prepare youth and adults for success in the workforce.

- Adult Education and Family Literacy: \$630.6 million (\$48 million increase)  
This program includes basic education, literacy, and English language programs for adults.

### **Welfare Reform Executive Order**

On April 10, 2018, President Trump issued an executive order, “Reducing Poverty in America by Promoting Opportunity and Economic Mobility,” which calls for the reform of public assistance and workforce development programs. The executive order includes the following benchmarks:

- Improve employment outcomes and economic independence by enforcing and expanding work requirements;
- Address the challenges for populations with barriers to find and maintain employment;
- Promote flexibility and accountability to allow state and local governments to tailor their programs and ensure administering agencies are held accountable in achieving outcomes;
- Reduce bureaucracy and consolidate duplicative or ineffective federal programs;
- Create a system for the federal government to promote flexibility for states and localities; and
- Empower local communities as well as the private sector to develop and apply solutions to locally based poverty.

### **Apprenticeship Task Force**

In June 2017, the president signed the executive order “Expanding Apprenticeships in America.” The executive order is designed to expand apprenticeships to train people for millions of unfilled jobs.

The executive order calls for:

- Establishing industry-recognized apprenticeships;
- Expanding access to apprenticeships;
- Promoting apprenticeship programs at colleges and universities;
- Improving the effectiveness of workforce development programs; and
- Establishing a task force on apprenticeship expansion.

The apprenticeship task force was divided into the following subcommittees:

- Education and Credentialing;
- Attracting Business to Apprenticeship;
- Expanding Access, Equity, and Career Awareness; and
- Administrative and Regulatory Strategies to Expand Apprenticeship.

The task force on apprenticeship expansion approved recommendations and sent them to the president for approval in May 2018. The recommendations include expanding traditional apprenticeship to achieve new employer engagement; streamlining program funding methods and access to grants; providing analysis to identify skill gaps; developing a new apprenticeship brand for marketing purposes; and piloting a project apprenticeship program in an industry without established registered apprenticeship guidelines but with a focus on mastery and competency.

## Other Workforce-Related Legislation

The following bills were recently introduced and will be monitored throughout the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress. Bill summaries may include information from GovTrack and the Library of Congress.

**HR 5146 – The Technical Education Creates High-Paying Careers Act.** This bill would authorize a training grant program under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. The grants would be available to higher education institutions that offer training programs designed to help individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds prepare for high-paying and high-demand jobs.

**HR 5291 – The Offshore Wind Jobs and Opportunity Act.** This bill would authorize a training grant program focused on the offshore wind energy sector. The program would prioritize community colleges, organizations that service minority populations, and organizations training workers transitioning from other industries.

**HR 5312 – The Opportunities for Success Act.** This bill would reauthorize the federal work-study program within the Higher Education Act. The bill would allocate work-study funding based on student need at colleges, set aside \$30 million for a pilot program to provide internships, and require schools to spend seven percent of their program funding on work-based learning experiences.

**HR 5649 – The Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William “Bill” Mulder Transition Improvement Act.** This bill would reorganize the Transition Assistance Program to require servicemembers to choose career-oriented transition tracks and take part in one-on-one counseling one year prior to their separation from the military. The bill would also authorize a \$10 million pilot program to provide grants to organizations that provide employment services to veterans after their transitions.

**HR 5658 – The Workforce Choices and Flexibility for Individuals with Disabilities Act.** This bill would amend the definition of competitive integrated employment in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and supersede its regulations. The legislation would provide funding with the goal of improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

**HR 5968 – The Online Job Training Act.** This bill would authorize an online workforce training grant program under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Eligible entities for the awards include schools, community-based organizations, and local governments.

**S 2565 – The Veteran Employment and Child Care Access Act.** This bill would provide a guarantee to veterans who are the primary caretakers of children to receive subsidized child care if they are taking part in rehabilitation and employment programs funded by the Departments of Labor and Veterans’ Affairs (VA). This could include child care at VA centers or other federal facilities, or vouchers similar to those used in state child care.

**S 2737 – The Creating Quality Technical Educators Act.** The bill would establish a grant program to fund career and technical education teacher residency programs. The residencies would be open to mid-career professionals in related technical fields, recent college graduates, veterans, or currently licensed teachers interested in moving into technical education. The programs would combine coursework for teaching technical education with in-classroom training supported by mentoring and professional development.

**S 2746 – The Federal Jobs Guarantee Development Act.** This bill would authorize a three-year Department of Labor pilot program that allows 15 local sites to run programs in which every adult resident in need of a job is offered a position paying up to \$15 per hour, with paid family and sick leave and health coverage. Jobs would focus on fields such as child and elder care, infrastructure, and community revitalization. The legislation would also add a Workforce Opportunity Credit category to provide an incentive for employers to hire employees from these programs.

**S 2775 – The Investing in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Partnership Act.** This act would authorize grants to school districts and colleges that implement career pathway programs aligned with industry needs. Funds could provide for career pathways coordinators, equipment, professional development, youth internships, and postsecondary classes for high school students.

**S 3061 – The Apprenticeship Hubs Across America Act.** This bill would establish a grant program intended to promote registered apprenticeships within in-demand industry sectors to support workforce intermediaries that work with local workforce development agencies, schools, and colleges. The grant funding may be used for marketing registered apprenticeship, apprentice recruitment, assisting employers in adopting training models, training costs, and support services for apprentices.